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Participation

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Dear Participant:

Public Consultation is one of the major elements in planning for the National and Historic Parks in the Western Region. In order for the public to make their contribution, Parks Canada must inform and involve the public early in the planning process. This newsletter will be one mechanism for providing this advance information. As new projects are being formulated, they will be announced, to allow you an opportunity to select the programs in which you or your organization wish to be actively involved. As well, current projects will be reviewed to keep you up-to-date on planning activities.

It is hoped that PARTICIPATION will become a valuable tool in expanding on the constructive dialogue that has developed between Parks Canada and the public in past programs. Your continued support and contributions to the development of our National Parks is appreciated.

William C. Turnbull
Director
Western Region
Parks Canada

Introduction

In 1978, Sunshine Village received ministerial permission to expand their downhill ski operation in Banff National Park. Permission was also given for the summer operation of the ski area. Related to this summer operation, many people have expressed concern about the potential for damage to the adjacent Sunshine Meadows as a result of improved access and uncontrolled pedestrian use. The meadows to the south of the ski area comprise an extensive area of alpine tundra and represent a significant National Park resource.

Parks Canada has received ministerial direction to prepare a long-range plan for the summer use of the area; Sunshine will be a co-operating partner. The plan will be designed to protect the special resource values in the area. Consequently, the Superintendent of Banff National Park has established a planning committee, composed of representatives of Parks Canada and Sunshine Village to develop a summer use plan for the area. The Government of British Columbia's Parks Branch is also involved because lands in Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park could be affected by the summer operation.

In addition, Parks Canada is inviting the public to review and comment on the methods that could be used to allow for visitor use in an environmentally conscientious manner.

In April 1981, a PARTICIPATION flyer was sent out that indicated that four alternative courses of action were possible with regard to summer access to the meadow area. We would now like you to examine these alternatives and forward your responses and any other ideas or recommendations that would assist the planning team in making their best recommendation. Although the alternatives are easily understood by those of us who have developed them, this may not be the case for those of you who are seeing them for the first time. You may have questions or queries that need



Sunshine Summer Use Plan Alternative Concept Stage



photo by Martin Price

to be discussed on a one-to-one basis. Should this be the case we are prepared to arrange an Open House in order to meet with you. There would of course have to be a substantial number of requests to justify the Open House Program, otherwise we will contact you directly with another newsletter as a plan is developed.

We would like your input by the end of September in order to proceed to the next step. The Planning Team will review and reassess the alternatives, in light of any new information discovered in the process and the public comments. In order that we are all able to appreciate the views of others, these public comments will be summarized and mailed back to everyone taking an active role in the program.

Following this initial public review of the alternatives, the Planning Team will develop a recommended plan. This plan will be forwarded to the public, probably in the autumn of 1981. At that time Parks Canada will invite your final comments before the plan is drafted for the Minister's approval.

Please review the information provided in this document. If you wish to respond, please forward your written comments and your preference for further contact (i.e. Open House, meetings, newsletter) to:

Parks Canada
520, 220 - 4 Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 2989, Postal Stn. "M"
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 3H8

Attn: Public Participation Co-ordinator

2. Background

The Sunshine area is 17 km southwest of the Banff townsite. Commercial operations began at Sunshine in the winter of 1934-35. Initially, guides took parties from a central lodge, located at the present site of Sunshine Village, on day-trips to

the surrounding slopes. Use of the area was not solely restricted to the winter months. As early as 1926, a cabin had been built in the area by the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, who regularly rode to the Mount Assiniboine and Egypt Lake areas. In fact, both hiking and horse-equipped parties were outfitted from Sunshine until the early 1950s.

During the early 1950s, the emphasis on summer use declined and winter use levels became more significant. Improved access and added service and ski lift facilities were responsible for the change.

Today, Sunshine is one of three downhill ski areas in the park - the others are at Lake Louise and Mount Norquay.

Sunshine Village now contains a hotel, day lodge, restaurants and staff accommodation. A new gondola system has been constructed which replaces the need for bus access to Sunshine Village from the Bourgeau parking lot. The buses formerly operated on a steep and winding 5.7 km-long road.

Sunshine Village wants the summer operation of the gondola to begin in 1982. Visitors would ride in the gondola to the Village complex where both day-use opportunities and overnight accommodation would be available.

The planning programme, described in this newsletter, is intended to provide direction for the long-term summer use of the area. The issue of summer use at Sunshine is not under review; past ministerial decisions have already determined that summer use is acceptable. Nevertheless, widespread concerns about potential adverse implications for the Sunshine meadows were acknowledged. These concerns will be addressed in this plan.

3. Objectives for the Sunshine Summer Use Plan

The Sunshine area contains outstanding examples of alpine and high sub-alpine landscapes. The area is a widely-recognized and valued component of Banff National Park and British Columbia's Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. The alpine meadows are an important resource in the national park system because of their expansiveness, magnitude, botanical diversity and visual quality. As such, any recommendations emanating from this planning programme are acceptable only if they reasonably ensure that impacts resulting from summer use are (a) known or predictable, (b) capable of being monitored, and (c) acceptable within the context of the resource protection mandate established for the areas surrounding Sunshine's lease boundary.

Specific objectives for the Sunshine summer use plan follow. (The objectives are the major criteria for determining rational and appropriate planning recommendations. In addition, they are standards for subsequently measuring the effectiveness of a plan once the recommendations contained in it are implemented).

1. The plan will be directed to the protection of the area's unique and fragile resources in the alpine, while providing summer visitors with opportunities to use and learn about the area.
2. Resource protection values will take precedence over summer use considerations. Where feasible, facility development and visitor use will be directed to already disturbed or altered areas.
3. Visitor management controls will be applied to ensure that pedestrian use does not threaten the area's natural resources.
4. Special attention will be directed by Sunshine Village and Parks Canada to providing visitors with an understanding and appreciation of alpine and high sub-alpine ecology.

4. Resource Description and Application of Recreational Use Limits

a) Resources of the Sunshine area

The village-complex is located in a transition or ecotonal area between the upper sub-alpine forest and alpine tundra zones. The sub-alpine zone in this area is neither unique nor rare to Banff National Park. The adjacent alpine meadows and portions of the ecotonal zone, however, are of significant resource value. These areas, which include the Sunshine meadows to the south of the village and Wah-Wah Ridge to the west, are of significance for at least two reasons. First, the area encompasses an unusually large and low-relief (2200 to 2350 m a.s.l.) alpine plateau. Secondly, the vegetation is representative of Cordilleran species near their northern limits and arctic species near their southern limits.

Notable land form features in the area include a rock glacier on the north-west face of Look-out Mountain and earth (frost) hummocks. The hummocks occur in both sub-alpine and alpine meadows where drainage is poor. They are easily damaged by human trampling. Several sink-holes, some up to 20 m in diameter, exist in the area south-east of Mount Standish.

Soils in the Sunshine area, while variable in type, are poorly developed and relatively infertile. Under dry conditions, they are stable, because of their high carbonate content. In situations where wet and saturated soils are present, the soil structure will quickly break down once disturbed. Trails will be developed to avoid these poorly-drained and potentially unstable areas.

Vegetation in the alpine zone is characterized by low-growing, perennial, herbaceous and shrubby plants, extensive mats of mosses and lichens and infrequent occurrences of krummholz tree communities. The transition zone in the area contains spruce, sub-alpine fir and alpine larch. The larch is an important visual resource in the autumn months. Wah-Wah Ridge and the Golden Bench on the Goat's Eye contain particularly impressive stands of larch. The Sunshine area is not known to provide critical or significant habitat for wildlife.

b) Recreational Use Limits

The maintenance of natural alpine and sub-alpine conditions at Sunshine is necessary to protect the area's natural integrity, to protect aesthetic values and to prevent erosion. Uncontrolled pedestrian use in this area would result in the severe alteration of existing alpine conditions. Unlike the lower forested sub-alpine areas where trees assist to define the limits of the trail tread, trails in alpine areas are quickly abandoned and paralleled when the tread is wet, muddy and entrenched. Then it resembles a railroad switching yard.

Consideration has been given both by Parks Canada and concerned visitors to establishing recreational use limits, based primarily on environmental parameters. While the idea of establishing environmentally-based use limits is promising, its practical application as a basis for resource management is not feasible for the following reasons: (a) soil and vegetation impacts are frequently related more closely to site characteristics than levels of use, (b) the soil and vegetation parameters which could be used to determine appropriate levels of use are complex, poorly understood, difficult to monitor and change greatly from site to site through time, (c) the extent of environmental impact is often related more closely to the behaviour of recreationists than to resource sensitivity.

Yet, it is apparent that any appreciable level of uncontrolled use has the potential for severe and undesirable environmental consequences. The development of a well planned system of trails, the provision of necessary visitor information and the imposition of visitor use controls is preferable to the attempted definition and enforcement of recreational use limits.

5. Recent Summer Use in the Sunshine Area

Pedestrian access to the Sunshine area is from Simpson Pass, Citadel Pass and the Bourgeau parking lot. Backcountry use along these routes is often restricted until early July by snow patches and wet trail conditions.

The number of hikers to the Sunshine area began to increase in 1975. Before then, visitor facilities at Sunshine Village were not operated for the park visitor during the summer and hikers were required to climb 520 m along the 5.7 km road between the Bourgeau parking lot and Sunshine Village. In 1975, the hotel was opened for overnight use and a twice daily bus service was started. This bus service was discontinued in 1977 because of the limited use it received. The bus service was not widely advertised, nor were the hiking opportunities actively marketed. The low levels of use between 1975 and 1977 do not represent, therefore, an accurate indication of the demand for similar opportunities once the gondola is operated.

During the period when the bus service was operating, approximately 600 visitors a year hiked from Sunshine to Mount Assiniboine and an equal number travelled from Sunshine to Egypt Lake. In comparison almost 1,600 visitors a year hiked up Healy Creek to Egypt Lake.

Although statistics on the amount of day-hiking in

the area are not available it is accepted that the levels are low. For example, it has been estimated that fewer than 100 visitors a year undertake walks into the Sunshine meadows, excluding the staff of Sunshine Village. Sunshine's summer employees account for a disproportionate amount of use. (Use levels will be monitored this summer).

These existing levels and patterns of use could be altered once improved and regular access is provided to Sunshine Village. In particular, it could be expected that Sunshine will become a preferred trail-head location for trips to Mount Assiniboine (via Citadel Pass) and Egypt Lake.

6. Proposed Summer Operation

Sunshine Village has proposed a year-round operation. The effective summer day-use operating season would probably occur between late June to mid-September. This summer day-use operation will depend on utilization of the gondola, running between the Bourgeau parking lot and Sunshine Village.

In addition to the gondola, Sunshine may operate the hotel, restaurant, lounges and souvenir shops. Further, Sunshine Village intends to operate an audio-visual interpretive and reception centre, (henceforth, referred to as the media centre). Because viewing opportunities are limited from the village complex, consideration has been given to the possibility of operating a chairlift to take visitors to a higher outlook. The existing Standish Chairlift and the planned Goat's Eye Chairlift are considered to be the best choices for this purpose.

Should a decision be made to operate either or both chairlifts, short walk-ways might be constructed to take visitors to a viewing platform and an interpretive display. Subject to the over-riding resource protection considerations, opportunities to begin walks or short hikes would be provided from the upper terminal of the selected chairlift.

The total number of visitors who would travel up the gondola in addition to hotel guests, would depend on a number of factors; the price, the manner in which Sunshine Village markets the opportunity and the availability of similar types of experiences with lower opportunity costs. Sunshine Village estimates that an average of 1,000 people a day would use the gondola. Given an 11-week summer operating season, this represents an expected annual summer use of 76,000 visitors.

Of this estimate, the number of visitors who might undertake walks will depend on the quality of walking opportunities, the level and quality of information describing those opportunities, and the weather conditions on any particular day. Demand created for the opportunity through marketing is another factor.

Surveys of those who hike and walk at similar operations elsewhere provide differing results. At Jackson Hole, Wyoming, only 8.5% of the 60,000 summer visitors who visited that area, went on guided hikes, and even fewer walked alone. At the Whistlers in Jasper National Park, a larger percentage of visitors walked up a ridge leading from the upper terminal of the tramway. Over 50% of the visitors to this area walked as much as 5 km (return) and 38% walked 6 km (return). In poor weather, the number who walked up to 6 km dropped to 15%. Weather is an important consideration in the developing of a summer use plan for the Sunshine area. Rain, cool temperatures, low clouds and strong winds would probably and significantly reduce the quality of visits. Based on observations at Sulphur Mountain, the Whistlers and the Columbia Icefield, tourists rarely dress for the cooler temperatures, strong winds and rain common to these areas. Mean daily temperatures at Sunshine Village are 5.5°C cooler than those at Banff townsite. The mean temperature at the summit of Mount Standish is 7.5°C cooler. On the average, skies in the Sunshine area are clear on 50% of the days in June and July and only 40% of the days in August and September. Rain or snow

falls on 30% to 35% of the days throughout summer.

It has been assumed for the purpose of this planning programme, that the Whistlers visitor participation data most closely approximates the situation likely to occur at Sunshine. (This assumption is based on the development and analysis of a preliminary visitor profile). It is also assumed that all the 1,000 daily visitors would take a chairlift ride beyond the village complex, were the opportunity provided. The main use of either operating chairlift would occur between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., with a mean hourly load for this period of about 170 people an hour. Observations of similar opportunities provided at Lake Louise, Sulphur Mountain and Mount Norquay suggest that visitors would spend between 20 and 30 minutes at the upper terminal, except when the weather was bad. It can be expected that between 57 and 85 persons would be at the upper terminal at any one time. Of this number, one-half of the viewpoint visitors would return to the village complex on the chairlift and the remainder would undertake some sort of walk.

7. Plan Considerations

The planning team has developed four alternatives for summer use in the Sunshine area. These alternatives relate to the possible operation of chairlifts and the development of trails. A series of options were also considered concerning the degree of control that might be placed on pedestrian travel. The control options are briefly described below. A more detailed description of the alternatives follows.

a) Visitor Management Options

Option 1 - NO CONTROL

- No controls (i.e. no enforcement by on-site personnel, no visitor quotas or restrictions) on walking in the Sunshine area;
- No new trails constructed, existing trails would be upgraded;
- If chairlift(s) operated, develop viewpoint and walkway at upper terminal(s) to confine use;
- Interpretive opportunities provided at media centre, pamphlets and self-guiding trails; and
- Monitoring effects of use on natural resource base (control mechanisms could then be instituted as required).

Option 2 - LIMITED CONTROL

The main points of this option are:

- Network of trails established from village complex and possibly upper terminal of chairlift(s) to direct dispersal of use;
- On-site personnel would be located at media centre and selected trail sections throughout the area to serve an interpretive and visitor management function;
- No controls on numbers of persons using trails (see Section 4b);
- Trail closures would occur as necessitated by existing conditions;
- Interpretive opportunities provided at media centre, self-guiding trails, static displays at suitable locations, roving interpreters and guided walks.
- Monitoring of environmental and visitor use parameters.

Option 3 - RESTRICTED USE

- No opportunities to hike or walk in the Sunshine area would be provided in conjunction with Sunshine Village operation (backcountry opportunities would continue to be permitted);
- Variety of direct and indirect control mechanisms would be used to discourage travel beyond Sunshine Village and chairlift viewing platforms (mechanisms include information, on-site personnel, signs and barriers); and
- A comprehensive interpretive programme would be provided including a media centre, display(s) at viewpoint(s) if chairlifts are operated, and personnel at media centre and viewpoints.

These management options have been evaluated by the planning team. As a result, Option 2 (Limited Control) appears to have the best potential for meeting the planning area objectives (see Section 3). This option is acceptable, to Parks Canada and Sunshine Village. If this option is adopted, the planning team believes that opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the special natural resources of the area can be provided without serious adverse environmental effects. The "Limited Control" option provides for the adoption of necessary direct and indirect controls to ensure that dispersed and uncontrolled use does not result in unacceptable levels of environmental change.

Though objections were identified for Options one and three, they were not favoured because it cannot be demonstrated that the desired ends with respect to resource protection could be achieved. Also, a total prohibition on walking in the Sunshine area is neither desirable in principle nor feasible operationally.

The option favoured by the planning team provides for establishing a network of walking trails where environmental considerations permit, a comprehensive interpretive programme, providing on-site interpretive staff, and monitoring environmental and visitor use parameters.

b) Plan Alternatives

The four alternate plans contain the following common elements. First, the "limited control" option is accepted as the required prescription for managing visitor use of the area. A variety of direct and indirect mechanisms would be used to control the distribution of pedestrian use in the area. These mechanisms include the development of trail corridors, the provision of information indicating the need to remain on established trails and the use of on-site personnel. These interpretive guides would provide the primary assurance that uncontrolled use does not occur in areas of noteworthy resource significance. The guides would act in the complementary roles of directing use, monitoring both use and possible use impacts, and serving in an interpretive capacity.

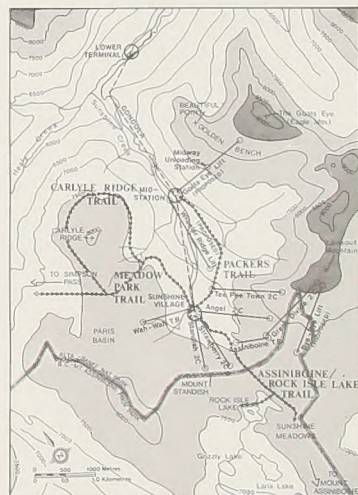
All plan alternatives contain a strong commitment to natural resource interpretation as a pre-condition for the use and enjoyment of the area.

Interpretive messages would focus on alpine and high sub-alpine ecology. The messages would be provided through the use of self-guiding interpretive trails, static displays at appropriate focal points, a media centre in the village complex, periodic guided walks and on-site personnel. Development of a detailed interpretive plan for the area will proceed once agreement has been reached on a preferred alternate plan.

Comprehensive monitoring would also be undertaken of environmental parameters and visitors use patterns. All development associated with the summer operation of the area would be phased to permit flexibility. The monitoring programme will provide the data base for determining changes in any phase of development.

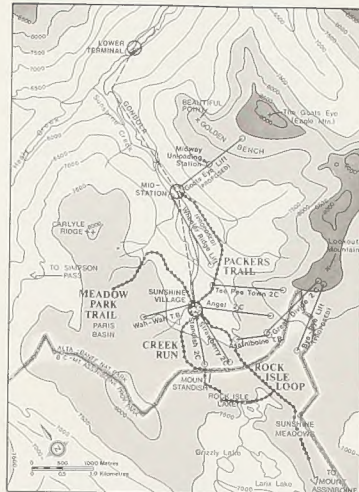
Alternative One - No Chairlift Operation

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit Sunshine interpretive media complex. Ride gondola to Sunshine Village where services are located. Trail network would originate from village complex. Upgrading and/or construction could be undertaken on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assiniboine/Rock Isle Lake Meadow Park Carlyle Ridge Packers' (with gondola reloading at the mid-station). On-site personnel required at media centre and Rock Isle Lake area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates concentrated and heavy use, associated with chairlift operation, in fragile alpine zone. Some operating efficiency provided to Sunshine Village without chairlift. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewing opportunities from village are poor. Quality of experience is limited for visitors unwilling or unable to use trails. Long-term commercial viability of day-oriented summer operation would be substantially reduced. Interpretive opportunities related to alpine ecology are restricted. Emphasis would be on off-site opportunities, with consequent loss in quality. Control of pedestrian circulation in vicinity of village complex could be dispersed and difficult to control, unless carefully managed. The alternative has limited marketing potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited environmental savings are off-set by a significant reduction in the quality of viewing and interpretive opportunities.



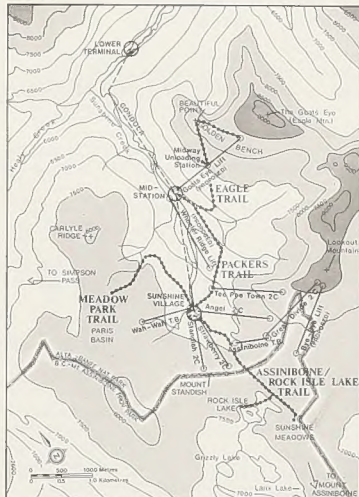
Alternative Two - Operate Standish Chairlift

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ride gondola to village-complex, where services and media centre are located. Ride Standish chairlift to upper terminal, where walk-way and viewing platform are provided. Trails would originate from Sunshine Village and Standish upper terminal. Upgrading from village required on Meadow Park, Packers' and Assiniboine. Rock Isle loop Creek Run trails could be constructed from upper terminal. (No new trails to Paris Basin or Larix/Grizzly Lakes proposed). On-site personnel required at media centre, viewing platform and Rock Isle Lake area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for superb views of Sunshine Meadows. Provides access for superior walking opportunities in the Rock Isle Lake area. Superior and unique opportunities are provided for the interpretation of alpine ecology. No comparable opportunities exist in the four contiguous mountain parks. Pedestrian use in the Sunshine Meadows can be carefully managed and monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires construction of new trails from summit of Mount Standish. Necessary side-hill cuts will result in some visual impairment. The alternative creates potential visitor management problems that must be resolved by officers of Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. Standish chairlift requires modification to accommodate downloading. Chairlift is not well suited for summer operation even with above modification. Provides opportunities that are more difficult to market than those related to the Goat's Eye alternative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The alternative provides excellent opportunities for walking and on-site interpretation, but promotes use and facility development at the margin of Sunshine Meadows.



Alternative Three - Operate Goat's Eye Chairlift

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit Sunshine interpretive media complex. Ride gondola to village-complex where services are located. Return to mid-station on gondola OR ride gondola to mid-station and disembark (small-scale media centre and snack bar could be provided). Ride Goat's Eye chairlift to upper terminal where walkway and viewing platform are provided. Trails would originate from Sunshine Village and upper terminal of Goat's Eye. Upgrading from village required on Packers' and Assiniboine/Rock Isle Lake. A trail would be constructed from the upper chairlift terminal to a high viewpoint overlooking the Healy Creek valley and down to the mid-point on the chairlift at the Golden Bench. The trail would continue down to the mid-station on the gondola. On-site personnel required at media centre, the viewing platform and possibly in the Rock Isle Lake area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to spectacular high elevation views of the Rocky Mountains and the Bow River valley. Provides excellent opportunities for short walk from upper terminal, to larch stands on the Golden Bench. Majority of use will be directed away from the Sunshine Meadows. Opportunities would be provided to interpret mountain building and life zones. Lift to be built on Goat's Eye would be well suited for summer use (would have detachable grip clamp for loading and unloading, and option for enclosed cars). The viewing opportunities ties have good marketing potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires construction of long segment of new trail from upper terminal of proposed Goat's Eye chairlift to gondola mid-station. Interpretive opportunities are significantly different from those available on Mount Standish. The Goat's Eye area is not well suited for the interpretation of alpine ecology. (Note: Guided walks to Rock Isle Lake could still be provided). Comparable viewing opportunities are provided on the Sulphur Mountain, Lake Louise and Whistlers gondolas, and at Bow Summit and the Big Hill. <p>Phasing problems may occur, associated with the development of the new chairlift, and clearing and revegetation of ski runs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With proper control mechanisms in place, the alternative has the potential to reduce use impacts in the Sunshine Meadows. Potential impacts of summer use are not determined. This data deficiency will be rectified early this summer. Viewing and interpretive opportunities would be a duplication of existing opportunities available in Banff National Park.



Alternative Four - Operate Standish and Goat's Eye Chairlifts

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives One and Two would be implemented and operated simultaneously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of viewing, interpretive and walking opportunities for repeat visitors. During inclement weather, open Standish chairlift would not be operated and enclosed cars on Goat's Eye used. Provides greater operational flexibility in cases where maintenance is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in expansion of facility development and attendant impacts to two mountains. Increases manpower allocation required for interpretation and pedestrian control. Alternative is less efficient operationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The alternative contains all the disadvantages of alternatives One and Two, with only limited advantages.

4 Mountain Park Planning Program

A program to prepare management plans for the four mountain parks of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho is presently being established by Parks Canada's Western Region. The program will approach the challenge in two ways: first, by assessing and resolving those planning issues and problems that are common to all four parks, and, second, by preparing a management plan for each park that incorporates the resolution for the common issues plus the resolution of park-specific issues and problems.

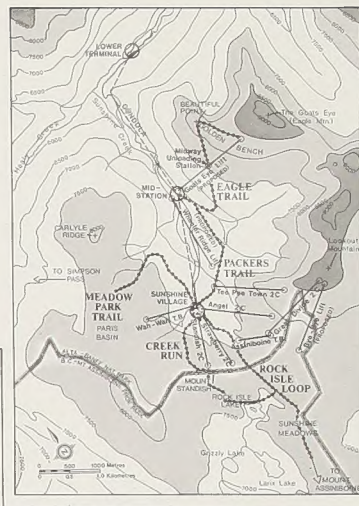
In order to meet these program objectives, Parks Canada will be undertaking a different approach compared to past planning programs. Rather than only one planning team, the mountain park planning program will have a program team in the regional office and a team from each of the four parks. The program team will be a multi-disciplinary team composed of planners, and resource conservation and interpretive specialists. This team will coordinate and direct the overall program, provide liaison with regional and park management, and work as team leaders/resource specialists on the park teams. The park teams will provide park operational and resource expertise to help solve both park-specific and overall issues and problems. As well, the park teams will provide close program contact for the park superintendents.

The initial hiring and assignment of staff to the program team has been completed. Staff include Don Pike as the

program co-ordinator, Bette Beswick as the resource management planner, Ron Hooper, and Jillian Roulet as park planners, and Lisa Casselman as the interpretive planner.

Members on the four park planning teams will include representatives from the various operational sub-activities such as visitor services, interpretation and resource conservation.

The mountain parks are at a significant period of their existence, with many demands and pressures being placed on their resources. As a consequence, the preparation of the management plans is a major concern and priority for Parks Canada. In order to develop a realistic and acceptable management direction for these parks, a public consultation program will be a primary and integral part of the planning program. The planning program will take approximately three years to complete, with public input occurring at all stages, from the definition of planning issues to alternative plan preparation to review of the "best" plan. It is anticipated that the initial rounds of public consultation to outline the terms of reference and the definition of planning issues will occur in the fall of this year. The planning team is looking forward to the start-up of the program and to meeting with the many individuals and organizations that will be contributing towards the preparation of the plans.



Should you have any questions concerning the program, please contact:

Don Pike
Program Co-ordinator
4 Mountain Park Planning Program
5th Floor, Government of Canada Bldg.
220 - 4 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 3H8
(Telephone 231-4431)

or Public Participation Co-ordinator
Parks Canada
5th Floor, Government of Canada Bldg.
220 - 4 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 3H8
(Telephone 231-4418)

Ski Area Development

As part of its policy to allow for the optimum development of the four ski areas in the mountain national parks, Parks Canada has asked the managers of Village Lake Louise Ltd. and Marmot Basin Ski Lifts Ltd. to prepare long term management plans for their areas. The planning programs for the two ski hills, which will include public involvement are scheduled to be conducted this fall. Although the planning for the two areas will occur independently of each other, the programs will allow for a more consistent and comparative discussion of ski hill development than would be possible otherwise.

Background information for the two ski areas will be prepared for distribution shortly. This information will acquaint and update you on the research and planning that has been completed to-date. Your comments and recommendations will be used to prepare the proposals which you will have an opportunity to discuss and comment on as work progresses towards the final plans for the two areas.

If you wish to become involved in either or both of these planning exercises please indicate your preferences on the coupon (adjacent) and return it to Parks Canada.

Public Consultation:

This newsletter introduces a number of planning exercises in which public consultation will be an important element. If you wish to become involved or to receive information as it becomes available please return this coupon with your complete name and address and indicate your main interests, in the blocks provided.

Name Postal Code

Address

Sunshine Meadows Summer Use ☐

4 Mountain Park Planning ☐

Lake Louise Ski Hill Planning ☐

Marmot Basin Ski Hill Planning ☐

OTHER ☐

(identify)

Comments:

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Return to: Parks Canada
520 - 220 - 4 Avenue S.E.
Box 2989, Postal Stn. "M"
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 3H8
ATTN: Public Participation

Environmental Assessment in Western National Parks

The Western Region of Parks Canada has implemented an administrative and research system to ensure that all projects which have the potential to affect natural resources in the parks are subject to an environmental impact evaluation. This system, which has been operating for two years was designed to achieve full compliance with the recently established Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP). The Federal Government formulated EARP in order to ensure that all projects involving federal lands or monies and which might affect the environment or natural resources are subjected to an environmental impact assessment.

Parks Canada's procedure requires that each park superintendent undertakes an annual review, with his managers, of all upcoming projects. Project proposals originating from other sources, but affecting park lands are included. Using established criteria, each project is evaluated in a preliminary environmental review which can determine that: 1, the project may proceed as proposed; or 2, the project may proceed with specified mitigations; or 3, the project requires environmental screening.

An environmental screening matrix is used to reveal the extent or complexity of projects which imply worri-

some environmental impact potential. This exercise can conclude that: 1, the project may proceed with specified mitigations; or, 2, the project requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment; or, 3, the project requires the preparation of an Initial Environmental Evaluation, or 4, the project is rejected on the basis of unacceptable environmental impact.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is prepared by the Resource Conservation Section of each park. EIA's normally deal with modest-sized projects where the environmental impact consequences can be mitigated by changes in project design, location or timing. An established format ensures comparability and a systematic approach between projects, parks and authors. Approximately sixty EIA's have been or are being prepared. Projects which threaten complex or unknown environmental impact, which may be interpreted to contravene the National Parks Act, or which might provoke high public concern or controversy are referred for an Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE).

IEE's are prepared by or under the direction of the EARP coordinator in Calgary. Completed IEE's include the CP Rail upgrading project at Lake Louise, and the Lake Louise Visitor Service Centre develop-

ment project and the CN Rail track twinning program in Jasper. IEE's are currently being prepared for the Marmot Basin Ski area, the Lake Louise Ski area, and the recently proposed CP Rail tunnel under Roger's Pass. IEE's normally have some element of public participation or public information program.

Projects which are exceedingly complex or highly controversial are referred to the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office (FEARO). FEARO convenes a panel of experts who direct the project proponent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement according to a set of established terms of reference. Subsequently, the panel holds public hearings in the locality of the project. The proposed twinning of the Trans Canada Highway in Banff is subject to this procedure.

All of Parks Canada's reports and screening documents are available for public review. Each park maintains a file pertaining to projects assessed for environmental impact, and interested individuals are invited to review these documents at the appropriate park office. IEE's are normally produced in larger numbers in order to facilitate a loan to interested associations, individuals or libraries. IEE's can be obtained through Parks Canada's regional office in Calgary.

Proposed Gulf of Georgia National Historic Park

Parks Canada is currently working towards establishing the Gulf of Georgia Cannery at Steveston, British Columbia as a National Historic Park. The site would depict the history of the fishing industry on the West Coast.

The Gulf of Georgia Plant, erected in 1894, operated as a salmon cannery intermittently until 1929 when operations ceased. During World War II structural changes were made to adapt the facilities for herring processing. After 1947 it was used only for herring reduction and as a storage area for fishing equipment.

The major structure in the proposed park is the Gulf of Georgia reduction plant which includes the original cannery and wharf area. This structure contains original tools, equipment and machinery related to herring reduction, some of which dates back to the turn of the century. Within this area there is space available for re-establishing a salmon canning line and for depicting the story of the entire West Coast fishing industry through a combination of graphics, audio visual media, exhibits and artifacts.

Two other structures, the guard house and lead foundry are included in the proposed park area. A small area to the rear of the cannery would be set aside as a landscaped area with public access.

Negotiations are continuing to determine land requirements for contemporary uses such as parking and access in conjunction with adjacent harbour development.

Further developments on this park proposal will be reported in future issues of this newsletter. If you would like more information, please contact:

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